22 July 1981

NOTE FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM   :   Robert M. Gates

SUBJECT :   EXCOM on Information Handling

        1. This package is not as clean as I would like. Nevertheless, there are several documents that you should see in addition to the Information Handling Architect's report and his associated papers. The Architect's package is at Tab I.

        2. At Tab II is a memo from Chuck Briggs, who will not be present for the EXCOM. His views are important and worth reading in light of the fact that he has worked the information handling problem in all four directorates as well as the Comptroller's Office. I do not know where Chuck got his reference numbers, but, to clarify for you, in his memo "3.a." refers to Appendix B of the Architect's package; "3.b." refers to Appendix C; and his "3.c." refers to Appendix D.

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        3. [   ] comments are at Tab III. They are, as usual, politically informative and insightful. Her references in paragraph 1 all are to the proposed Regulation in the Architect's package at Appendix D.

        4. The Planning Staff memorandum is at Tab IV.

        5. Based on all that I read, I believe the entire organization may be getting wrapped around the axle on this subject. The Architect's report in itself is an effective demonstration that he is making considerable progress both in establishing his office and in laying groundwork for a more coherent Agency strategy/plan in dealing with information handling. It is to be expected with the creation of a new organization such as the Architect's Office that there would be some bruises and bumps along the way, as well as some ambiguities in the way
STAT he conducts his business. [   ] view, which I share, is that it is probably premature to issue a Regulation or a Notice crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's for the Information Architect so soon after he has arrived on the scene. He is bound to be impatient with the slow progress, and the other organizations are bound to be wary of his role. But it is probably too soon to draw the boundaries firmly.

        6. My recommendations are as follows:

        --   Approve Appendix A on mission and functions, revising point 3
                to read "coordinates all Agency information handling systems
                architecture" and point 8 to read "recommends system designs
                to fulfill architecture."

--   Approve the Architect's strategic planning paper at Appendix B.

--   Approve the proposed policy and procedures for management for information systems at Appendix C. Note the highlighted portions on pages c.3, c.5, and c.6, where Chuck Briggs' comments seem to have merit. Again, it seems to me that verbs such as "accredit," "validate," might be replaced by something easier to swallow bureaucratically like "coordinate on." Additionally, Chuck is almost certainly correct that we should retain flexibility vis a vis adherence to government-wide standards.

--   Disapprove the draft Regulation at Appendix D. It is premature.

7. I believe you should conclude the session with remarks to the effect that you recognize that issues have arisen with respect to the advisability of placing the Information Handling Architect in the DDA, his authority to approve systems architecture and on some other matters as well. You might compliment [ ] on the progress that he has made so far and suggest that, with the approval of the mission and functions (as revised), the planning strategy, and policy and procedures for management for information systems, ample scope has been provided to the Architect to carry out his mission, particularly for the short term. You might then propose that the EXCOM devote part of a meeting in about six months to revisiting the question of placement of the Architect and certain of his authorities, based on a full year's experience. At that time, a Headquarters Regulation might be issued.

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Robert M. Gates